*264. *[The questioner (Shri Gaya Singh) was absent. For answer vide page 30.]*

*265. *[The questioner (Shri Vijay J. Darda) was absent. For answer vide page 39.]*

Dereserved forest areas

*266. SHRI DRUPAD BORGOHAIN: Will the Minister of ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS be pleased to state:

(a) the policy of Government to allot Periodic Deeds to the occupants in the dereserved forest areas of Assam;

(b) whether Government have decided to issue periodical *pattas* to the occupants in dereserved land of a thousand bighas in Rangali Forest Reserve and sixteen thousand bighas in Panidihing Forest Reserve of Sivasagar district of Assam;

(c) if so, what is the time-frame; and

(d) whether Government have any policy to convert forest villages into revenue villages in near future?

THE MINISTER OF ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS (SHRI T.R. BAALU): (a) to (d) A Statement is laid on the Table of the House.

(a) to (c) There is no scope for allotment of Periodic Deeds by the Government in the dereserved forest areas as the subject matter pertains to the jurisdiction of the State Government. Government consider the diversion of forest areas for non-forestry purposes on merit on getting proposals recommended by the State Governments and after examining the same as per the rules and guidelines under Forest (Conservation) Act, 1980. The Government of Assam has informed that there is no such policy for allotment of Periodic Deeds in the dereserved areas. As informed by the State Government, there is no reserved forest called Rangali. As regard Panidihing Reserved Forest, the State Government has informed that the 5632.34 acres have been dereserved and handed over to the Revenue Department.

(d) Government issued detailed guidelines for conversion of all forest villages in the country into revenue villages on 18th September, 1990.

SHRI DRUPAD BORGOHAIN: Madam, my first supplementary is, according to the Supreme Court verdict, 33 per cent of forest cover is necessary to keep the ecological balance in a State. And it is scientific too. But the forest cover in Assam is above 36 per cent of the total land. Why did the Assam Government evict the peasantry from the forest land which it has occupied for the last several decades? What is the reaction of the Union Government to this matter?

SHRI T.R. BAALU: Madam, the Government of India's policy is to have one-third forest cover for ecological balance. For that purpose, a policy has been worked out and it is going in the right perspective. As far as Assam is concerned, the Central Government and the State Government are taking proactive measures. There is no need for any apprehension in this regard.

SHRI DRUPAD BORGOHAIN: Madam, my second supplementary is this. In reply to (b) part of my question, he says that the Government issued detailed guidelines for conversion of all forest villages in the country into revenue villages on 18th September, 1990. I would like to know from the hon. Minister what those guidelines are. I know that in Assam such forest villages are not converted into revenue villages. What are the reasons? What are the guidelines?

SHRI T.R. BAALU: Madam, the salient features of the guidelines are forest villages may be converted into revenue villages; the area to be converted include original *patta* for habitation and cultivation plus common facilities like roads, schools, creamation grounds, etc. These are the basic features of the guidelines.

Collaboration in scientific and technological fields

*267. SHRIMATI N.P. DURGA:††
SHRI RAMA MUNI REDDY SIRIGIREDDY:

Will the Minister of SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that an agreement between India and Italy has been entered into to pave the way for enhancement of collaboration in scientific and technological fields;

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††The question was actually asked on the floor of the House by Shrimati N.P. Durga.